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Popular attitudes to memory, the body, and social identity: the rise of external commemoration in Britain, Ireland and New England

By HAROLD MYTUM

SUMMARY: A comparative analysis of samples of external memorials from burial grounds in Britain, Ireland and New England reveals a widespread pattern of change in monument style and content, and exponential growth in the number of permanent memorials from the 18th century onwards. Although manifested in regionally distinctive styles on which most academic attention has so far been directed, the expansion reflects global changes in social relationships and concepts of memory and the body. An archaeological perspective reveals the importance of external memorials in articulating these changing attitudes in a world of increasing material consumption.

INTRODUCTION

A large proportion of the population today expects their burial place to be marked with an appropriate monument. The form of this memorial varies, partly due to the locale of interment and its cultural and religious implications.¹ Today almost all memorials, of whatever form, are external features. Perhaps because of its ubiquity, this phenomenon has been merely noted by historical archaeologists and art historians.² Sarah Tarlow identified the gravestone boom from research in Orkney,³ but no more substantial analysis has taken place. Many of the previous quantitative studies of monuments in New England and England⁴ used percentages to overcome different sample sizes over time, but in so doing did not analyse this very pattern of growth. The dating of gravestone monuments, particularly the earlier ones, is not without its problems,⁵ but all adjustments tend to accentuate the trends identified here. It is therefore necessary to define when external commemorative practice began to be popular, to explore any variability in this development in selected parts of Britain, Ireland and New

England, and offer explanations that relate to both taphonomic processes and past socio-cultural change.

The internal monument, on the wall or floor, is now a rare addition to a church, yet in the Middle Ages and for some centuries afterwards these were the memorials most frequently erected, particularly with the rise in the use of brasses and wall monuments.⁶ The vast majority of interments had always been outside churches, but those able to erect memorials were normally buried and commemorated within the building.⁷ The growth of external commemorative memorials was due in part to the shift outside of burial by those whose predecessors may have been interred inside the building, but it was also because commemoration became more popular in a wider section of the community.

Whilst small numbers of headstones are known from the Middle Ages,⁸ most external memorials were grave slabs or tombs similar in style to those found within churches.⁹ Some crosses, in stone or wood, did mark graves and served as foci for prayers for the soul of the deceased; very few remain, but they are mentioned

in wills.¹⁰ External commemoration remained rare after the Reformation; a few monuments survive or have been documented in some regions.¹¹ Although the rise in external commemoration may have begun in the 17th century, it seems to have happened in relatively few regions such as Bedfordshire, Gloucestershire and parts of Scotland.¹² Even in these areas the numbers of memorials were small, and the use of permanent markers remained a minority commemorative tradition that only expanded rapidly in the later 18th and early 19th centuries.

POST-REFORMATION MEMORIAL TRADITIONS

The form of early external monuments was varied.¹³ Extant interior types inspired some; the horizontal ledger slabs were identical to those used in the floors of churches, and chest and table tombs could also find similar parallels.¹⁴ Examples of these are widely scattered, but rarely in any numbers at any one site; St Andrews, Scotland is a notable exception.¹⁵ These memorials were largely of stone, although cast iron was used in a few regions.¹⁶ In some areas the lettering, often initials, could be crudely carved on stone monuments.¹⁷

Headstones were a form designed for external use; few are known from the 16th century, although Burgess illustrates one from Broadway, Worcestershire.¹⁸ Most of the 16th- and 17th-century headstones were inscribed only with initials and the year, but sometimes age and other information were included. These small markers represent the first post-Reformation external memorials beyond the aristocratic and higher gentry and merchant ranks. Burgess suggests that the variation in type indicates that the masons were experimenting with a new memorial form,¹⁹ although elements of continuity with previous practices can be noted. Some of the earliest external memorials were small, round-headed panels, or variously shaped expanded heads on a vertical shaft (Fig. 1:1–2). During the later 17th century a few more memorials are known, but are still generally very scattered, and again of simple forms inscribed with initials or limited texts. A few exceptions can be identified, however, which indicate localized beginnings of memorial expansion in the late 17th century. In and around Charlestown and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Potton, Bedfordshire,²⁰ West Yorkshire, and St Andrews, Scotland, there are small but significant groups of more complex and often larger memorials with more sophisticated designs.²¹ These are the precursors of the styles that became dominant

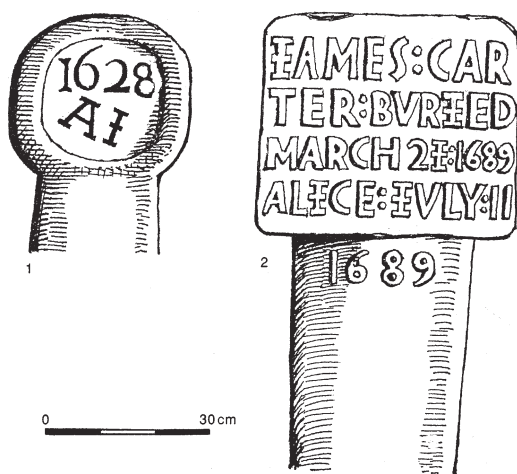


FIG. 1

Early simple 17th-century headstones. 1. Lower Swell, Gloucestershire; 2. Over Silton, North Yorkshire (after Burgess 1963, 117).

in the later 18th century (Fig. 2: 1–2). The first workshops, such as that of the Lamson family of Charlestown and Malden, Massachusetts,²² indicate the first external memorial specialist carvers. At Hartford, Connecticut, an early peak in memorials (Fig. 3) can be attributed to the work of one man, George Griswold.²³ These early increases in commemoration presage the rapid rise at these locations and elsewhere during the 18th century.

CHANGES IN MONUMENT TYPES FROM THE 18TH CENTURY

By the early 18th century more regions had headstones; some mirrored internal wall monuments in shape and style, others may have developed from the existing external forms, whilst yet more were entirely new creations. Links between memorial shapes and designs, and local furniture traditions, have been suggested;²⁴ almost no masons would have been full-time memorial carvers. Most external memorials were still simple (Fig. 4). Initials or more complex texts and designs could be inscribed on unshaped pieces of stone or reused architectural fragments or millstones.²⁵ Whilst Tarlow suggests that such simple memorials were home-made,²⁶ many were sufficiently complex to indicate the work by trained craftsmen, though not full-time gravestone carvers. By this time, the evidence from some regions of Britain, Ireland and New England suggests that specialized production had begun,



1



2



3

FIG. 2

Early elaborate memorials. 1. Headstone carved by Lamson workshop, Cambridge (Mass.); 2. Headstone, Potton, Bedfordshire (photograph, Kate Chapman); 3. Tomb top, Morley, West Yorkshire.

though still often rustic in style²⁷ and by individuals involved in other craft work.

During the later 18th century, the number of small or irregularly shaped memorials rapidly declined, although they continued in some areas such as the Orkneys.²⁸ More standard shapes including the 'bedstead' and other symmetrical headstone forms now became common (Fig. 5). More extensive texts, inscribed in more evenly produced lettering, now became the norm. These generally gave full names and fuller dates of the deceased, and often provide further information through such elements as introductory phrases to

the text, and explicitly stated social relationships, occupations, locations of residence, and epitaphs. Moreover, decorative features at the top of the stone, and down the sides of the memorial flanking the inscription, became standard. The competence in composing and carving these also increased. The degree and type of decoration, shape of memorials, and details of the text varied regionally and over time, but the format was now quite different from most monuments of the earlier period, and developed from the few early workshop centres already described. Whilst all these features had long been part of the earlier internal monument repertoire,

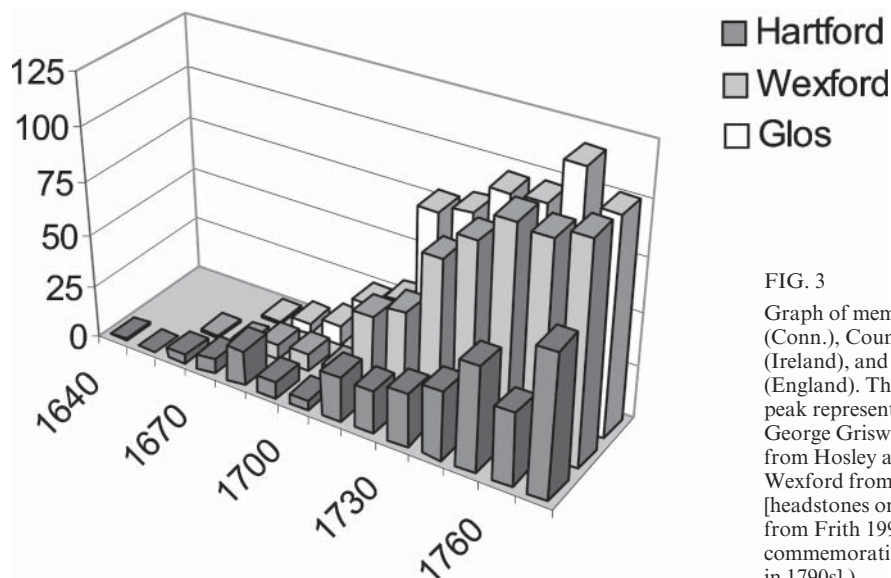


FIG. 3

Graph of memorials at Hartford (Conn.), County Wexford (Ireland), and Gloucestershire (England). The early Hartford peak represents stones carved by George Griswold. (Hartford data from Hosley and Holcombe 1994, Wexford from Grogan 1998 [headstones only], Gloucestershire from Frith 1990 [sample of external commemorations listed by Bigland in 1790s].)

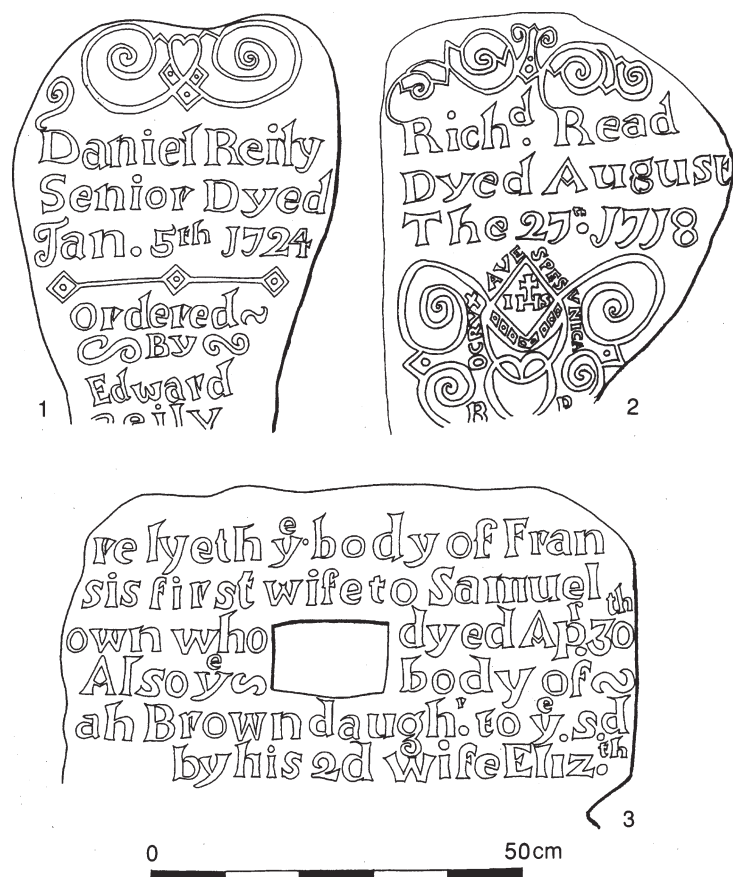
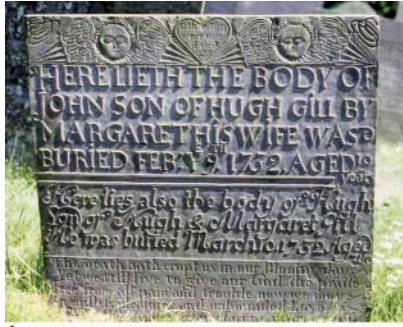


FIG. 4

Simple early 18th-century headstones from Balrothery, County Dublin. 1, 2. Unshaped water-rolled rock with text and decoration; 3. Reused fragment of millstone with crude but extensive lettering (after Mytum 2004b).



1



2



3



4



5



6

FIG. 5

Standard 18th-century headstones from England (1, 2, 4, 5), Ireland (6), and New England (3), showing regional variations (2, 4 photographs, Philip Rahtz).

and also occurred more frequently on external ledgers, they now became widespread on all memorials. The grammar of design for memorials still in use today developed at this time.

It is therefore possible to identify a qualitative change in monument form, decoration and text during the 18th century whereby an elite minority form of commemoration on a designed memorial became the widespread popular style. This can also be linked to the rapid increase in the number of memorials.

THE RISE IN FREQUENCY OF 18TH-CENTURY EXTERNAL COMMEMORATION

The chronology of memorial development can be demonstrated through a range of large-scale memorial samples from several regions of Britain, Ireland and New England. They consist of archaeological surveys directed by the author in North Yorkshire, England; Pembrokeshire, Wales; and sites in Counties Louth, Offaly and Galway, Ireland. These can be compared with published archaeological data from Orkney, Scotland,²⁹ and from a major survey in Exeter County, Rhode Island, New England.³⁰ As the numbers of 17th-century memorials in these regions are so small, the analysis begins in the early 18th century. It ends in the 1840s, because by then the upward trajectory is well established. From the middle of the 19th century a greater variety of burial

locations was instituted, including many nonconformist burial grounds and urban cemeteries. These created different physical and social contexts for commemoration³¹ and make comparison with earlier patterns more problematic. The wider social participation in commemoration found in the later 19th- and 20th-century burial locales therefore requires a separate analysis.

The combination of all five samples, a total of over 2,800 memorials, shows a clear exponential increase in memorials over time, gathering in pace from the late 18th century (Fig. 6). This is an impressive pattern in need of explanation; but before this trend can be accepted, it is necessary to consider any biases in the survival of early monuments. Archaeologists are familiar with the various processes that can affect the nature of the surviving evidence, and these transforms need to be carefully considered.³²

Stone memorials may weather either completely or so that they become illegible and undated; even memorials typologically datable to the late 19th century may be found collapsing if made of soft stone.³³ In some regions many inscriptions have eroded, but there are others where local geology offers materials that do not weather, such as slate and granite. This differential survival has been noted in New England where the slate memorials of Eastern Connecticut survive much better than those of sandstone.³⁴ However, the overall trends identified here are not challenged by the process of erosion; areas with local slate such as

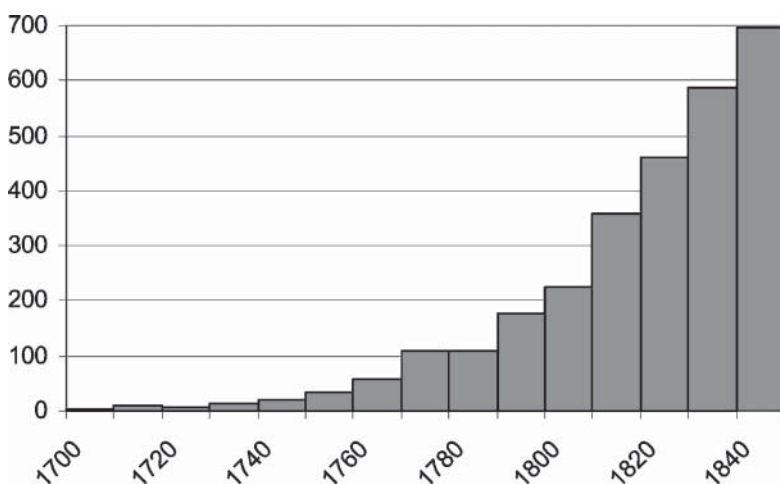


FIG. 6

Graph of external memorials in five sample areas combined.

Pembrokeshire offer similar patterns to others such as North Yorkshire where some sandstones were hard and others more vulnerable.

It is possible that many early external memorials were in wood, and that the recorded pattern represents not a rise in commemoration but the choice of material used. Wooden post and rail markers survive in south-eastern England and head boards have been noted from eastern North America, although most are known from documentary sources.³⁵ A stone marker from Hadley, Massachusetts, is thought to be a skeuomorph of a timber post which may have been the common form used in New England.³⁶ The early English stone forms consisting of expanded heads on a vertical shaft (Fig. 1:1) could also have been based on a wooden upright onto which was fixed a panel with painted or carved identifying details.

Benes postulated an evolution of timber forms that led to the 'bedstead' shape found in New England and Britain.³⁷ However, the 'bedstead' gravestone forms probably only point to links with furniture, because the same craftsmen made both, rather than because memorials were also in wood. Illustrations of churchyards in south-eastern England, where timber memorials still survive, often show such monuments in churchyards (and in greater numbers than those that survive today), but illustrations of graveyards outside that region do not show timber memorials. The same is the case for the few detailed documentary accounts, such as that of Horley, Surrey, where the dominance of wooden rails is noted, with a little over a quarter of burial sites (though not of the total number of burials) marked in this manner.³⁸ It is likely that timber was only used where local stone was unsuitable; at Ashworth, Derbyshire, in the Pennines, only stone monuments were recorded in 1722.³⁹

Clearance of old grave markers may have taken place at various times, and this could have stripped many burial grounds of almost all their early memorials. There are many documented examples of recent removals, often for easier grounds maintenance or for safety. In the past, clearance may have been part of the cyclical pattern of burial, which has been demonstrated by excavation for the medieval and early modern period.⁴⁰ It also may have occurred when plots used by one family were appropriated by another as family lines died out or as plots were abandoned when families migrated. It is also possible that continued use of a plot by a family over many generations would have led to the removal of older memorials to allow room for new monuments to commemorate the recently deceased. This last pattern has been noted in some Irish graveyards

where some older memorials have been laid flat on top of the graves with a new monument placed at the head of the grave plot.⁴¹

Internal and external wall memorials are known to have been moved, and many were cleared away with the 19th-century rebuilding of many British and Irish churches, although some had been previously recorded by antiquaries. Ledger slabs on the floor of the church have also often been replaced when a new floor was laid. Although there was occasional 18th- and 19th-century churchyard reorganization, this was not as widespread as the internal reordering which was usually associated with liturgical modifications, the changing significance of pews, and the introduction of large pipe organs.

There is also archaeological evidence for graveyard stability; material traces of removed churchyard memorials found in other contexts are extremely rare, although some examples have been noted. These include a body stone found as a shop doorstep in Fishguard, Pembrokeshire, and some cast-iron memorials reused after destruction of churches in Sussex.⁴² Some 17th- and early 18th-century external memorials have clearly been moved, but others appear to be still *in situ*, often on the south side of the church near the porch.⁴³ Medieval churchyard memorials were often incorporated into the 19th-century rebuild of churches,⁴⁴ but post-Reformation examples are rare. Early modern memorials may not have been considered worthy of such display by antiquarians; but, if there had been later extensive clearance of 17th- and early 18th-century memorials, many should be recovered during more recent grave digging or restoration. Memorials would have been ideal building stones for the church and churchyard boundary walls and paths. Rediscovery would also be the case if the recent replacement already noted in Ireland had been widespread and long-lasting. However, the lack of early modern examples recovered from current churchyard operations which have been accompanied by archaeological watching briefs is notable, although medieval and earlier remains are still regularly recorded by such means on ancient church sites.

In New England, burial was often begun at a new graveyard when the old one was full, and this may in part explain the excellent survival of early stones there. It is notable that where there have been graveyard shifts in Ireland the survival of older stones has been higher than at sites that continued in heavy use.⁴⁵ A sexton's list of 1722 for Ashover, Derbyshire, reveals many simple inscribed memorials, none of which can now be identified, yet many later stones remain.⁴⁶ As the new and more sophisticated types became

common, the simple forms inscribed only with initials may have lost their significance and so were removed. Even at Ashover, however, the number of early stones erected per decade would still have been low, and would have been dominated by those of the later boom. Those samples from areas with more frequent graveyard shifts, such as Ireland and Exeter County, Rhode Island, show similar patterns of gravestone increase to those with graveyard stability such as Pembrokeshire and North Yorkshire. There is no reason to assume that differential survival has created this pattern, although the numbers of memorials in the late 17th and early 18th century may once have been higher, perhaps to the levels of the 1750s (Fig. 3). Evidence from Gloucestershire recorded by Ralph Bigland in the 1790s provides names and dates on headstones, although not how many stones these represented.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, taking a sample of graveyards, a pattern of incremental increase is visible in data collected over 200 years ago, when erosion and destruction would have been much less (Fig. 3). Again this shows the trend seen elsewhere, suggesting that it is a real pattern. For example, good survival in County Wexford, Ireland, shows a similar rise in headstone use and an increase in headstone erection can be demonstrated at Hartford, Connecticut. Here, the particular historical value of this site was recognized in the 19th century, improving the chances of survival of early memorials.⁴⁸

It can be demonstrated that the rapid rise in external commemoration took place in the 18th century, and not earlier, although a greater proportion of the infrequent early memorials may have been lost. The pronounced rise in the latter half of the 18th century is far too great to be explained by the differential survival of monuments only a few decades apart in date. In the following century, the pattern of extensive permanent commemoration became widely established both geographically and socially.

DISCUSSION OF THE PATTERN

The overall pattern seen in Figure 6 can be broken down by region, to identify the extent to which this was a widespread phenomenon. Despite some variation in sample size, the individual graphs are all similar, with the exception of Ireland where a decline can be seen from the 1820s (Fig. 7). This may reflect graveyard shifts and a dominance of early graveyards in the sample. Also, Irish grave-stones tend to be used for more generations than those in the other samples.⁴⁹ Once erected the same memorials continued to accrue names and so fewer new memorials were required. Even in Ireland,

however, the initial rise is similar in scale and date to the other samples. Thus the increase can be noted in areas dominated by Anglican, nonconformist Protestant, and Catholic populations. There is no evidence that the boom began significantly earlier in one denominational community and then spread to others. This dynamic may be present in local case studies, but overall the trend shows no such correlation.

The growth in external memorials from the later 18th century can be demonstrated for samples from areas of England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and New England. Expansion in external commemoration may have been enacted through regionally diverse styles of monument, text and decoration. These variations may be linked to ethnicity, religion, social structures, cultural norms, practical factors such as geology, and these regional and local variations are important and worthy of study. However, they need to be set within the overall trend that was widespread and demands broader explanation.

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE RISE IN EXTERNAL COMMEMORATION

Understanding of the rise in gravestone commissioning and production should be related to increasing consumption in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁵⁰ There were specific reasons why the external memorial was chosen as an item of consumption at this time, and these are discussed below, but the wider trends within which these commemorative decisions were made can be identified through the studies of other goods such as food and drink products, ceramics, textiles, and other manufactures. Here gravestone studies contribute to wider debates in historical archaeology which relate to social and economic history and cultural anthropology.⁵¹ It is noteworthy, however, that the graveyard boom comes significantly after the growth in domestic possessions as revealed by probate inventories.⁵² It is possible that consumption beyond the home followed on from a new level of materiality first achieved in the domestic setting. The graveyard then offered a new, and more public, arena for consumption. As the gravestone can be more easily related back to the specific context of commissioning and manufacture than many items of material culture, it may be able to offer a significant insight into this process.

Various explanations for the rise in commemoration have been offered in the past, although explaining this phenomenon has not been the main focus of research. With the notable exception of Tarlow,⁵³ most researchers have taken

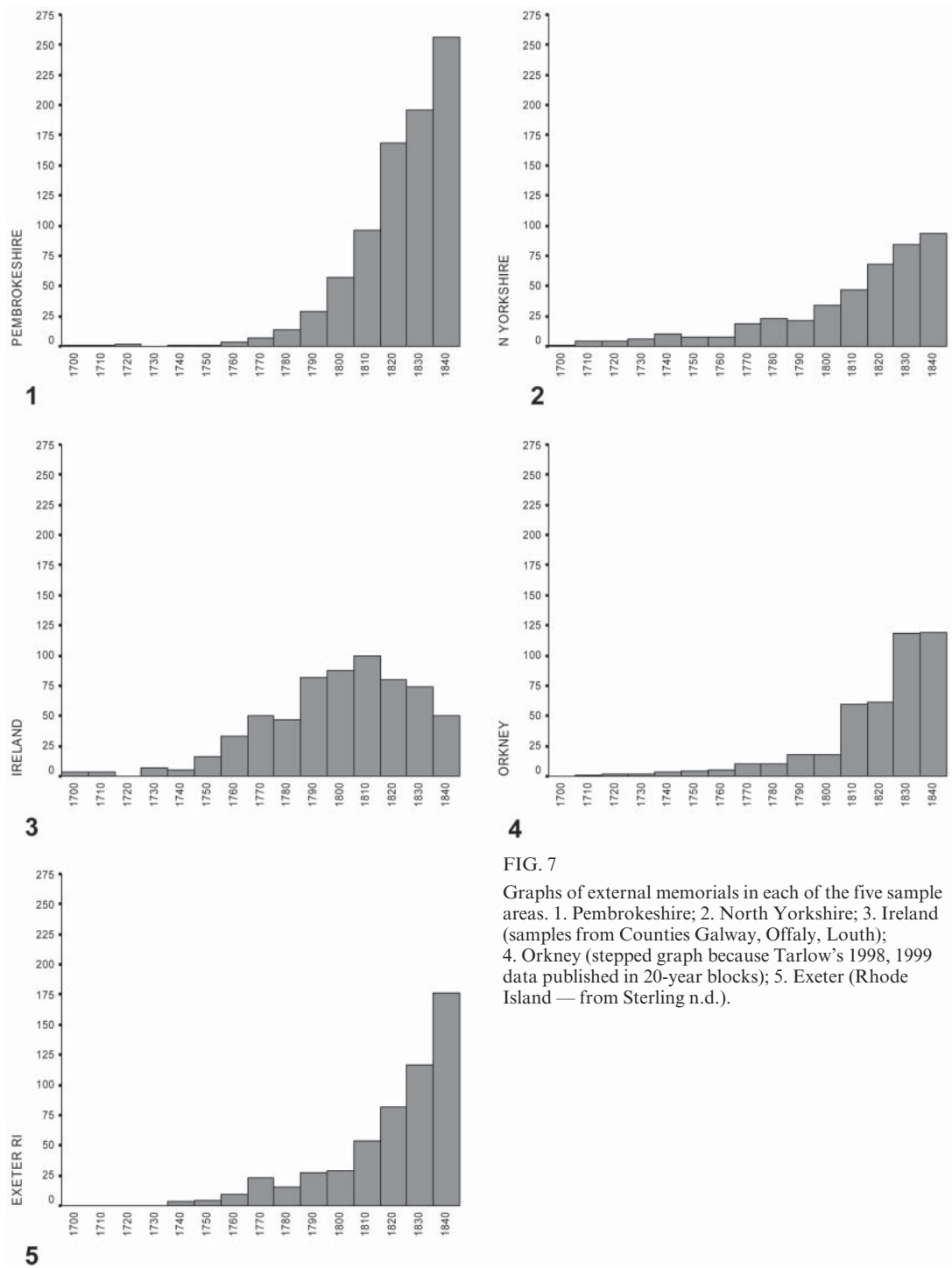


FIG. 7
Graphs of external memorials in each of the five sample areas. 1. Pembrokeshire; 2. North Yorkshire; 3. Ireland (samples from Counties Galway, Offaly, Louth); 4. Orkney (stepped graph because Tarlow's 1998, 1999 data published in 20-year blocks); 5. Exeter (Rhode Island — from Sterling n.d.).

the development of external commemoration for granted, as an inevitable evolution. Where any explanation is given, it has been in a short aside, implying economic growth or a general rise in material goods.⁵⁴ The cultural phenomenon has not been set out and examined against evidence from a range of data sets. As Glennie notes, goods could have multiple meanings and that these combined functional, decorative and private associations, with meanings linked to identity and social ideology.⁵⁵ This is clearly the case with mortuary monuments. It is thus likely that various factors were operating on these different aspects that, in conjunction, led to the boom. Nevertheless, a nexus of causes combined, across a wide geographical area, to produce the same increase in demand and production.

The greater distribution of wealth produced by economic growth has been given as the reason for the rise in external memorials.⁵⁶ It is a truism that sufficient resources must be available to obtain the memorial, but that is a necessary but not sufficient explanation. The evidence presented by historians indicates that the economy grew significantly during the time of the boom. Berg notes British growth of 0.6% per annum in the period 1760–80, increasing to 1.4% in 1780–1800, and rising still further to 1.9% in the period 1801–31.⁵⁷ This accumulating wealth clearly created resources that could be expended on material goods.⁵⁸

Willsher observes that technological changes in the early 19th century led to significant changes in forms, materials and style.⁵⁹ These changes have now been quantified in a case study,⁶⁰ but the rise in commemoration was already well under way by this time. Indeed, the shift to mass-produced quarry products inscribed by local masons was only a late stage in the evolution of increased memorial production.⁶¹

It has been argued that the development of external monuments reflected popular emulation of internal elite memorials.⁶² Ledgers were translated from the floor of the church to the churchyard turf, and tombs could also be produced outside. Headstones were adaptations of the wall monument. Tarlow argues that the simple external Orkney memorials do not make any attempt to copy internal memorials.⁶³ This is the case for the early headstone forms (Fig. 1), but elements of the more complex memorials do indicate the influence of internal memorials. Similarities include the use of mortality symbols, cherubs, cartouches on which to place inscriptions, and baroque and rococo decorative features. These appeared on external monuments including headstones from the 17th century.⁶⁴ External memorials do not

necessarily suggest an attempt to copy high-status memorials in all their complex meanings,⁶⁵ but there was often emulation in terms of motifs and styles. The social context of their use varied over time and location, however, and was associated with local class and religious dynamics, and the range of skills and experience of local masons. One example of the way in which headstones could develop beyond the wall monument was to use the front and back of the stone, a feature popular in northern England, Scotland and parts of Ireland.⁶⁶

Emulation has also been proposed as a major factor in the development of the undertaking profession and the types of funeral offered.⁶⁷ Whilst some elements of the heraldic funeral were utilized within elaborate middle-class funerals, this emphasis may need to be reassessed to consider innovations and differences that cannot merely be linked to costs. During the later 18th and 19th centuries the material fittings of coffins became not only more elaborate but also more widespread in their use.⁶⁸ This increase in consumption has been explained as a result of the promotion of these features by funeral directors.⁶⁹ Consumers are largely seen as without power, although later in the 19th century they did indeed react against the elaborate funeral. A more archaeological approach to both coffin fittings and memorials suggests that there may have been weaker consumer control at the time of the funeral than by the time that memorials were commissioned.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it would seem that consumers were not emulating the aristocracy, but were using the various stages of the mourning experience in complex ways that combined personal grief with fulfilling social expectations and manipulating appropriate public images.

Whatever the source of inspiration for the styles and symbolism of external monuments (which requires further research), the physical and social context of use differed from that of internal memorials. Wrightson notes that gentlemen tradesmen gained in confidence during the 18th century; and, whilst they may have married the offspring of landed gentry, they did not wish to join them socially, and retained instead their own distinctiveness.⁷¹ The development of external commemoration may be an example of this confidence and difference. Consumption of goods could demonstrate luxury that could be enjoyed, and the choices made by clients could express identity.⁷² The easily created visual diversity of memorials allowed both individuality and, through the commemoration of several individuals on one memorial or the grouping of monuments on a family plot, could emphasise the stability and nature of family connections which Berg considers were important middle-class concerns.

Inscribed stones presuppose comprehension by the population at large. The shift from initials to full texts reflects increased literacy of not only those commissioning monuments but also of the wider public expected to view them in the burial ground. Whilst literacy, particularly reading ability, can be difficult for historians to measure, correlation with signing names where sufficient evidence exists suggests that this is a useful and at least measurable standard.⁷³ During the later 18th century literacy in England was over 60% for men and 40% for women, and in New England by 1760 over 80% of men and 45% of women were literate.⁷⁴ External memorials could now actively define and promote social identities through longer inscriptions that could be understood by a significant proportion of the population. What had previously been limited to a small elite was now a widespread opportunity, and memorials became active in the repertoire of material culture during the 18th century and later. Literacy in a wider range of social classes may have been a necessary precondition for the boom and so explains the timing of its start, but the rise in gravestone erection was not mirrored by an increase in literacy. Only between 1850 and 1900 did literacy rise further, from 70% to 95% for both men and women.⁷⁵ The increased literacy rate may thus have made commemoration socially valuable, but it does not correlate with the boom, and does not have a simple direct relationship to it. Rather, reaching a certain threshold of literacy within society may have been necessary for commemorative practice to spread socially, but thereafter literacy levels were not important.

A by-product of increased literacy was the celebration of events through the use of inscriptions giving dates and often associated names or initials. These occur on a wide range of material items including furniture, bottles, ceramics and church bells.⁷⁶ This began in the later 16th century and increased during the 17th and 18th centuries, and was linked to a greater awareness of history through the production of printed chronicles and almanacs. The practical application of linear time, and the desire to remember the individual's place within it, were factors in the creation of memorials that stated names or initials, and dates. This may be seen as another necessary condition for the external boom in commemoration, but was of itself not the cause of the rapid rise.

It is through the commemorative text of a monument that familial social relations and roles are often used in the definition of identities. Tarlow argues that stones, even with only initials and date, could provide a focus for memory and grieving at the grave itself, and that the development of emotional feelings within families

was an important driver for external memorials.⁷⁷ Although Tarlow was been inspired by Campbell's concept of emotion and romanticism in consumption,⁷⁸ his ideas regarding traditional and modern hedonism were not applied to memorials. Traditional hedonism involved consumption to avoid discomfort, but hedonistic consumption attempted to create a condition of enjoyable discomfort.⁷⁹ The quality of sensibility — being sorry for oneself and others — developed alongside hedonistic consumption; together they made the investment in graveyard memorials appropriate. Such items did not relieve grief but both marked and potentially focussed it (although other memorabilia were also important). Hedonistic consumption could also apply to those planning their affairs prior to death; one could take enjoyment and comfort in a consumption that one could dream of but not actually experience. Monuments that were erected prior to death could indeed be enjoyed, and again part of the motivation may have been envisaging the family mourning and remembering the individual after death; the physical monument gave certainty and solidity to those anticipated memories. The commissioner of the memorial could also imagine surviving relatives grieving at the family grave and having their names eventually added to the existing memorial, which would thus become a focus for attention and a physical presence to inform family and community history.

The growing consumer society placed greater emphasis on the ownership of goods, and this extended to burial plots, a factor acknowledged by Tarlow but not developed in her analysis.⁸⁰ In some regions this theme of possession is explicitly stated in monumental inscriptions.⁸¹ The emphasis on ownership can be seen as an integral part of the growth of capitalism, together with increased segregation and separation of individuals and activities seen in more complex house plans, landscape enclosure, and pew use in churches.⁸² The rise of the marked grave plot should be seen as part of this wider trend of separation. The permanent memorials marked burial plots that were required by the family as a safe and managed place of deposition for deceased relatives. As such they could act as a point of grieving and social display, and would be the anticipated resting place for future family members. Other families who required a plot and may have desired a particular location could readily see if it was already taken, and so the graves would not be disturbed. The monument therefore also protected the deceased from intrusion by strangers, although repeated interment within a family plot could lead to disarticulation of earlier generations. The use of memorials, even with little

or no inscription, helped the sexton locate existing family graves and assisted in the selection of new plots. That memorials for this purpose needed little carved detail can be seen on the list of interments recorded in Ashover, Derbyshire, in 1722.⁸³ As the population of many communities increased, the pressure for plots, especially in desirable locations, became more intense. The use of a material good to mark family ownership, and the presence of interred family members in that defined space, would seem an appropriate response in the increasingly consumerist society.

One of the implications of the greater emphasis on the individual and the small family unit was an increased interest in the body. This was reflected in consumption through spending on items such as food and drink and textiles,⁸⁴ and in the mortuary sphere with increased use of coffins and memorials. It was also manifested in greater attention to the corpse prior to and during the funeral, and in the desire to prevent disturbance of remains once buried.⁸⁵ This is further emphasized by the use of ledgers and tombs that covered the whole body, head and foot stones or low kerbs that defined the grave, and the use of introductory phrases such as 'Here lies the body' or 'Underneath this stone'. For those who could afford it brick- or stone-lined shafts further defined and protected the deceased. First developed for tombs inside churches,⁸⁶ they became common outside as pressure on burial spaces there increased.

CONCLUSIONS

Two distinct phases of commemoration can be identified in the post-medieval graveyard, each of which requires separate explanation. First, there was the development of a permanent memorial tradition after the Reformation when medieval monumental styles — the chest tomb and the grave slab — continued and small, inscribed, headstones or grave markers developed. Further data collection from the dispersed and poorly studied survivals is necessary to understand this phase. Second came the rapid rise in the number of headstones during the 18th century. Clear regional styles developed which were then replaced by more standardized forms following the further increase in erection during the 19th century. These forms came into use across much of the English-speaking world.⁸⁷ This can be explained by a combination of forces that interacted with each other and encouraged those with the desire to mark permanently a relative's grave to have the knowledge, confidence, and resources to commission a stone. Increased interest in the integrity of the family and its

property, in terms of memorials, burial plots, and bodies interred, encouraged the development of external memorials in a world where consumption and ownership of material goods was becoming so important. The forms of external memorials were inspired partly by elite internal memorials, as increased literacy and education enabled the social role of such monuments to become effective across more of society. New practices developed, however, and existing monumental traditions were adapted to different social and physical contexts. As the funerary industry took shape, commercial pressures, combined with social ones, widened the repertoire of memorials in the 19th century.

There are thus many trends that could and probably did contribute to the boom in graveyard memorials from the later 18th century. It is not possible to single out any one as preeminent throughout the English-speaking world (and possibly also across Europe). Particular forces may have been of greater importance in specific contexts; this will only be appreciated once contextualized studies are carried out in regions where samples of memorials are large enough and suitable documentary sources are available. The combination of many causes does, however, explain why the boom was so widespread. Consumption continued to increase in all regions, and by the later 19th century all classes actively participated in external commemoration. The erection of a graveyard memorial was seen as the norm for a century, a pattern only recently challenged by the innovative disposal of cremated remains and alternative forms of green burial.⁸⁸

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NOTES

¹ Mytum 2004a.

² Burgess 1963; Willsher 1985; Chase & Gabel 1997.

³ Tarlow 1998; 1999.

⁴ Dethlefsen & Deetz 1966; Cannon 1989.

⁵ Mytum 2002a.

⁶ Hadley 2001; Llewellyn 2000.

⁷ Kemp 1980.

⁸ Stocker 1986, 9; Burgess 1963; Butler 1964; Hadley 2001.

- ⁹ Burgess 1963, 109–10.
- ¹⁰ Burgess 1963, 147.
- ¹¹ Burgess 1963; Houlbrooke 1998, 362–6.
- ¹² Mytum & Chapman 2005; Willsher & Hunter 1978.
- ¹³ Mytum 2004a.
- ¹⁴ Ariès 1981.
- ¹⁵ Fleming 1931, 63–177.
- ¹⁶ Willatts 1987.
- ¹⁷ Shoesmith 1980, 84–5; Tarlow 1998; 1999.
- ¹⁸ Burgess 1963, 17.
- ¹⁹ Burgess 1963, 117.
- ²⁰ Tucker 1993; Mytum & Chapman 2005.
- ²¹ Brears 1981; Fleming 1931.
- ²² Tucker 1993.
- ²³ Caulfield 1951.
- ²⁴ Brears 1981.
- ²⁵ Mytum 2004b; Tarlow 1998; 1999.
- ²⁶ Tarlow 1998, 36.
- ²⁷ Caulfield 1967.
- ²⁸ Tarlow 1998.
- ²⁹ Tarlow 1999.
- ³⁰ Sterling n.d.; Good & Sterling 1994.
- ³¹ Mytum 2004a.
- ³² Schiffer 1987.
- ³³ Mytum 2000, 2.
- ³⁴ Slater 1996.
- ³⁵ Burgess 1963; Rauschenberg 1990; Crowell & Mackie 1990; Forman 1968.
- ³⁶ Benes 1975.
- ³⁷ Benes 1975.
- ³⁸ Houlbrooke 1998, 365–6.
- ³⁹ Anon. 1897.
- ⁴⁰ Mytum 1996.
- ⁴¹ Mytum 2004c.
- ⁴² Willatts 1987, 111.
- ⁴³ Mytum 1996; Shoesmith 1990.
- ⁴⁴ Hadley 2001.
- ⁴⁵ Grogan 1998; Mytum & Evans 2002.
- ⁴⁶ Anon. 1897.
- ⁴⁷ Frith 1990.
- ⁴⁸ Hosley & Holcombe 1994.
- ⁴⁹ Mytum 2004c; 2004e.
- ⁵⁰ Brewer & Porter 1993; Campbell 1987; McKendrick *et al.* 1982.
- ⁵¹ Glennie 1995; Douglas & Isherwood 1978.
- ⁵² Weatherill 1988.
- ⁵³ Tarlow 1998; 1999.
- ⁵⁴ Burgess 1963; Tarlow 1999; Willsher 1985; Chase & Gabel 1997.
- ⁵⁵ Glennie 1995, 179.
- ⁵⁶ Willsher 1985.
- ⁵⁷ Berg 1994.
- ⁵⁸ Weatherill 1988.
- ⁵⁹ Willsher 1985, 12.
- ⁶⁰ Mytum 2002b.
- ⁶¹ Mytum 2004d.
- ⁶² Ariès 1981; Burgess 1963; Graham 1958.
- ⁶³ Tarlow 1998; 1999.
- ⁶⁴ Mytum & Chapman 2005.
- ⁶⁵ Finch 2000.
- ⁶⁶ Willsher & Hunter 1978; Mytum & Evans 2002.
- ⁶⁷ Litten 1991; 1998.
- ⁶⁸ Reeve & Adams; Litten 1985.
- ⁶⁹ Litten 1991.
- ⁷⁰ Mytum 2004f.
- ⁷¹ Wrightson 2000.
- ⁷² Berg 1994, 130–3.
- ⁷³ Cressy 1980, 54; 1993.
- ⁷⁴ Cressy 1980, 177, 183.
- ⁷⁵ Cressy 1980, 177.
- ⁷⁶ Mytum forthcoming.
- ⁷⁷ Tarlow 1998; 1999.
- ⁷⁸ Campbell 1987.
- ⁷⁹ Campbell 1987, 77–95.
- ⁸⁰ Tarlow 1998; 1999.
- ⁸¹ Mytum 2004b; 2004c.
- ⁸² Johnson 1996.
- ⁸³ Anon. 1897.
- ⁸⁴ Porter 1993; Weatherill 1988.
- ⁸⁵ Litten 1991; 1998; Mytum 2004a.
- ⁸⁶ Litten 1985.
- ⁸⁷ Mytum 2000; 2004a.
- ⁸⁸ Jupp & Walter 1999.

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